



**Route 29 Project Delivery Advisory Panel
May 26, 2016
Summary Meeting Minutes**

NOTE: The meeting video is posted at route29solutions.org.

Meeting 45 of the Route 29 Project Delivery Advisory Panel (PDAP) was held at the Virginia Transportation Research Council in Charlottesville, Virginia on May 26, 2016. Meeting information included:

- Meeting Agenda
- Presentation addressing agenda items

All material distributed at the meeting is available at route29solutions.org

1. In attendance: Chip Boyles, Morgan Butler, Mark Graham, Kristin Szakos, Brad Sheffield, Chris Engel, Henry Weinschenk. Facilitator: Philip Shucet. Guest: Secretary Aubrey Layne

Absent: Pete Borches, Karen Weiner.

VDOT Technical Team members were also in attendance.

Suspend agenda for panel conversation with Secretary of Transportation Aubrey Layne:

Aubrey Layne said he's pleased with how the projects are progressing and with the work of the panel. He said the traffic disruption may seem more severe because the area has not had highway construction in many years. Route 29 Solutions is going to be replicated and used as a best practices model in VDOT, with aggressive project delivery paired with extensive community involvement and communication. He noted that the package of projects may not be the ultimate answer, but are a part of the solution.

- Chip Boyles said the MPO is inviting the CTB to meet in Charlottesville and view the Route 29 Solutions progress. Aubrey Layne it could happen, but likely several months from now.
- Kristin Szakos complimented the access the public has to information. Aubrey Layne noted that the more transparent and accountable the process is, the better the results.

- Morgan Butler asked for an update on the additional train to DC. Aubrey Layne said the state is negotiating with the two railroad companies for the necessary slots. Kristin Szakos suggested that a more detailed report would be of interest, and Aubrey Layne indicated the state rail chief could come and brief the panel at a future date.
- Aubrey Layne noted that the CTB will become independent July 1 when they no longer serve at the will and pleasure of the Governor and can only be removed for cause.
- Chip Boyles asked about a case study being conducted on the Route 29 Solutions process. Philip Shucet confirmed that the Virginia Tech school of construction management is doing a study looking at the project in context of other projects around the county that had accelerated schedules.
- Henry Weinschenk said he believes there's a missing interstate in Virginia that should run parallel to Route 29 and asked if the state is planning for a new highway or bypass in the region in the future. Aubrey Layne discussed the difficulty of getting greenfield projects approved by federal agencies. And he said the state plans a corridor study to examine future opportunities.

2. Public Feedback:

Sixteen e-mails were received and no new comments were made on the Provide Input section of route29solutions.org. One call and one e-mail were made to the project hotline and contractor. A summary of comments is included in the meeting presentation which is posted on the project website route29solutions.org. In addition:

- The Volunteer Fire Department has activated the signal pre-emption at Berkmar and Route 29 a couple times.
- Adjustments to the Woodbrook signal have been made.
- Drivers are getting adjusted to the new two-lane ramp at Best Buy at the Route 29/250 interchange.
- VDOT is advising drivers not to cut through Fashion Square Mall or any other private property.
- Henry Weinschenk said there are inadequate lane markings in front of Fashion Square Mall. Philip Shucet said the situation has already been corrected with added lane markings.

3. Report on PDAP Feedback. Details are included in the meeting presentation which is posted on the project website route29solutions.org.

- Philip Shucet commended Lou Hatter for his face-to-face outreach with businesses and the community as well as radio appearances, and Joel DeNunzio for regularly appearing on TV and radio.

4. Panel Feedback/Open Discussion

- Chip Boyles said last week (with the lane closures) he made his best time ever from the airport to the Route 250 bypass.
- Morgan Butler said visibility is somewhat obstructed at the right turn from Rio west to Route 29 north.
- Morgan Butler also inquired about paving on Earlysville Road. Dave Covington said it is nighttime paving unrelated to the project.
- Brad Sheffield asked about getting more real time notification of accidents. He said the morning traffic accident resulted in Jaunt's new Route 29 Express service to be late for the first time. He asked if a programmable changeable message sign can be used to warn of accidents and alternate routes. Dave Covington said there's a tiered system for when a message board would be deployed, generally for accidents causing more than 5 to 10 minutes delay. Philip Shucet said VDOT will revisit that tiered system and consider eliminating it for the summer.
- Chris Engel said that while driving the Rio intersection with his 16-year-old daughter recently she asked if it's the place that's "Worth the Drive," referring to the business marketing campaign.
- Henry Weinschenk suggested a more visible detour sign for Branchlands Blvd. or one that notes to take the second traffic light, not the first traffic light. Kristin Szakos agreed the signing could be more clear.
- Morgan Butler asked for details about the morning traffic accident on Route 29 in the southbound lanes of Route 29 just north of Myers Drive. Dave Covington said a pick-up and a larger boom truck not involved in project construction sideswiped during a lane change. They did not move their vehicles until after police could observe and determine fault.
- Joel DeNunzio researched the paving schedule and noted that Earlysville Road paving occurring between 7 p.m. and 5 a.m. will finish June 10.

5. Construction Milestones: Graphic is included in presentation posted on route29solutions.org.

- Philip Shucet said Lane-Corman was well ahead of the 1% shown on the %complete chart.
- Dave Covington noted that there are no issues with the gas and power utility relocation on Route 29 widening and they are not on a critical path. Dominion Virginia Power had to suspend work temporarily to take care of an emergency elsewhere.
- Bid review is underway on Hillsdale Drive extension.
- Route 29/250 interchange opened all lanes to traffic May 20. Barrels remain outside of travel lanes for finishing work. Philip Shucet expressed his disappointment that, while the lanes opened, the entire work was not completed by May 21.
- Mark Graham said he watched traffic moment at the new ramp and observed that a number of drivers were confused and didn't realize two lanes can exit right. Dave Covington noted the same but said by Tuesday or Wednesday drivers were getting used to the new traffic pattern.

- Kristin Szakos suggested that the sign indicating “right lane must turn right” at the approach to the ramp may be superfluous.

6. Route 29 Solutions Project Updates: Dave Covington reviewed project updates. Updates with photographs are included in the presentation posted on route29solutions.org.

Bullets below reflect additional information and discussion other than that included in the presentation.

- Route 29/250 Interchange:
 - Chip Boyles noted that some pedestrians may not understand the new sidewalk configuration on Route 29 at the interchange. Dave Covington also noted that some pedestrians are unaware and still use a foot path in the grass on the side of the road instead of the new sidewalk in the median.
 - Morgan Butler asked when all work will be done. Dave Covington said it would be either the end of this week or sometime next week.
 -
- Rio GSI
 - Intersection closure and major construction began Monday.
 - Dump trucks are hauling the 60,000 cubic yards of dirt out of the intersection.
 - Kristin Szakos inquired about the blue police lights and asked if they could be less bright because they can be blinding.
 - Thirteen beams were set last night (schedule called for 9 beams).
 - Progressing much faster than planned and contractor is 3 shifts ahead of schedule.
 - In response to Brad Sheffield, Dave Covington said excavation will take about 3 weeks if the current pace is sustained.
 - The signal light pre-emption for the dump trucks has been going well.
- Route 29 Widening
 - Work has slowed somewhat as some crews have shifted to the Rio GSI.
- Berkmar Extended
 - Blasting of north mass by Kohl/s will probably not happen this week. More information is needed, so will likely not occur for a couple weeks.
 - Kristin Szakos asked about discharges of dirt or spillage into the river. Joel DeNunzio said there’s been reports of sediments in the river and it was verified as coming from a non-VDOT project north of the Berkmar project.

- Hillsdale Extension: Hal Jones provided the update.
 - Bids are included in the presentation; apparent low bidder will be announced June 6.
 - Responding to Henry Weinschenk, Hal said the city has indicated notice-to-proceed will be issued late June.

7. Interim Milestones Rio GSI: Chart is included in the presentation posted on route29solutions.org that tracks interim construction milestones. Completed tasks are Albemarle Square signal removed, Fashion Square signal removed and utilities permanently relocated.

8. Budget Update: Chart is included in the presentation posted on route29solutions.org.

- Additional money for the Route 29'250 interchange is for an outstanding change order for additional hand rails.

9. New Business and Wrap Up

The next panel meeting is June 9, 2016, at 2 p.m. at Virginia Transportation Research Council in Charlottesville, Virginia.

The meeting was open to the public, streamed live, and is available on video at route29solutions.org